



For Immediate Release

March 24, 2020

Press Contact

Michelle Francis

340-718-2980

Michelle.Francis@dhs.vi.gov

**USVI Department of Human Services Announces
COVID-19 Block Grant (Child Care Subsidies) Updates**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS— During this crisis period where the Territory is also being greatly impacted by Covid19, The Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services today announced updates to its Federal Block Grant (Child Care Subsidy) application process. The Federal Block Grant program provides funding that enables approved applicants to find and afford child care for children ages zero to twelve.

In this current State of Emergency, the Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services will ***only process Block Grant Applications for Informal Child Care Providers*** (known as Family, Friends, and Neighbor Care). **No new Block Grant Applications will be accepted for child care centers.**

Because we know that most child care centers have reduced their hours or closed entirely, DHS is providing financial assistance (Federal Block Grant):

- For care provided by *informal childcare providers* (i.e. family members, friends, neighbors ***not*** living in the child's home)
- For children ages zero to twelve years old
- For families (who are **required to report to workplaces** the Governor specified as essential or important to remain open during this State of Emergency)
- Income eligibility determined on a case by case basis

Block Grant (Child Care) applications are now available for parents and guardians on the Department of Human Services website Child Care and Regulatory Services page - www.dhs.gov.vi/OCCRS/index.html. The application can be downloaded, filled out and sent in, or an application can also be picked up, when necessary (from 8:00 a.m. – 2 p.m., Monday through Thursday), at:

- St. Croix - Office of Child Care, #129 Golden Rock

3011 Golden Rock • Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820 • (340) 718-2980 ph • (340) 773-6121 fax
1303 Hospital Ground, Suite 1 • St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802-6722 • (340) 774-1166 ph • (340) 774-3466 fax

- St. Thomas - Office of Child Care - Knud Hansen Building, 1303 Hospital Ground,
- St. John - DHS Office in Cruz Bay

Completed applications can be scanned and emailed to BlockGrant.Application@dhs.vi.gov or dropped off to secure drop boxes (monitored by security and surveillance) at the previously identified locations.

The completed application will be reviewed by the staff, and applicants will be contacted within five (5) working days. **An *in-person interview* will not be necessary.**

Informal Provider (Family, Friend, Neighbor - FFN) Application

Individuals selected by the parents or guardians to take care of children, ages 0-12, must also complete the **Informal or FFN Provider Application**, which can be downloaded on the Department of Human Services website Child Care and Regulatory Services page at www.dhs.gov.vi/OCCRS/index.html.

To be approved as an Informal or FFN Provider, the ***provider cannot live*** with the parents or children. A clearance by the V.I. Police Department Criminal Records and V.I. Sex Offender Registry is required for all non-family child care providers.

Please contact the Department of Human Services Office Child Care and Regulatory Services with questions:

St. Thomas/St. John	– (340) 774-0930 ext 4181
St. Croix	- (340) 772-7147

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

For more information on COVID-19, the new strain of coronavirus, please visit the USVI Department of Health's website, www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus or text COVID19USVI to 888777. #COVID19USVI

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